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98TH CONGRESS } SENATE { REPORT
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EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE CONGRESS THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAINTAIN CURRENT EFFORTS IN FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS TO PREVENT INCREASES IN DOMESTIC HUNGER

MARCH 8 (legislative day, MARCH 7), 1983.—Ordered to be printed

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Mr. HATFIELD, from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. Con. Res. 6]

The Committee on Appropriations, to which was referred the concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 6), expressing the sense of the Congress that the Federal Government should maintain current efforts in Federal nutrition programs to prevent increases in domestic hunger, reports the same favorably to the Senate with the recommendation that the concurrent resolution be passed.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 6 expresses the sense of the Congress that (1) the Federal nutrition programs, including the food stamp, child nutrition, and elderly feeding programs, should be protected from budget cuts that would prevent them from responding effectively to nutritional needs in the United States; (2) the special supplemental food program for women, infants, and children (WIC) should continue to be funded at the full level authorized by law; and (3) the Federal Government should maintain responsibility for nutrition programs.

The Committee notes that due to the current high levels of unemployment, more Americans are relying on Federal nutrition programs to assure their families and themselves an adequate level of nutrition. Participation in the food stamp program in November 1982 was a record high—1.6 percent higher than the previous month and 5.4 percent greater than 1 year earlier. Participation in the special supplemental feeding program for women, infants, and children (WIC) totaled 2.4 million in November, a 20-percent increase from 1 year earlier, and the

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number of students who received free lunches under the school lunch program has increased by about 300,000.

The Congress has closely scrutinized and made significant changes in the child nutrition and food stamp programs over the past 2 years to achieve budgetary savings. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that as a result of changes made by the Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1981 and 1982, the required program level for the child nutrition programs has been reduced by an average of $1,300,000,000 per year between fiscal years 1982 and 1985, and for food stamps, reductions average $1,700,000,000 per year for the same period.

There have been recent reports that the infant mortality rate may, in fact, be on the rise again in areas hard-hit by the recession. Nationally, the majority of infant deaths is associated with low-birth weight. Dates from several studies have shown that participation in the WIC program is associated with a significant increase in birth weight and has resulted in a reduction in the incidence of infants with low-birth weight. The resolution specifically highlights the value of the WIC program and the need to continue to fund WIC at adequate levels.

The Committee believes the Federal nutrition programs perform a valuable function and are an integral part of the social safety net. Any reduction in funding for these programs which would impair their ability to effectively respond to the nutritional needs in the United States would not be acceptable.

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